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SUBJECT: DANGERS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE BIG SCREEN (ECONOMIC WEEK IN REVIEW, OCTOBER 26 - NOVEMBER 1, 2009)

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DANGERS OF CLIMATE
CHANGE ON THE BIG SCREEN

¶1. (SBU) On October 24, an Lebanese environmental NGO, the League of Independent Activists (IndyAct), hosted a screening of the drama documentary, "The Age of Stupid," highlighting the dangers of climate change, in collaboration with the British Embassy, the American Lebanese Chamber of Commerce, and the Green Party. As part of the Global Campaign against Climate Change, IndyAct also organized the "man in the cube" project, whereby an activist was placed in a transparent box for three days to highlight the dangers of global warming. Organizers noted that more than 600 people attended the film screening, while they have already received requests from several private companies to screen the movie for their staff. According to IndyAct, no Arab government has adopted the 350 parts per million carbon dioxide concentration target that IndyAct and the global climate change movement advocate.

IPR WORKSHOP FOR JUDGES

¶2. (U) A three-day workshop for judges on intellectual property rights (IPR), organized by the Ministry of Economy and Trade (MOET) in collaboration with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the Judicial Training Institute (JTI), kicked off in Beirut on October 26. All of the current 16 trainee judges attended, along with more than 30 junior judges. The workshop featured an overview of IPR, IPR laws in Lebanon, enforcement issues, and discussion of IPR-related court cases. JTI head Sami Mansour noted the importance of enforcement of IPR laws in Lebanon and the need to issue tougher sentences against infringers to improve the IPR environment. The Lebanon Judicial Strengthening Project, a USAID-funded project run by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) since November 2007, is also working on increasing awareness and understanding of IPR in the judiciary.

NATIONAL CARRIER
ANNOUNCES RECORD PROFITS

¶3. (U) National airline Middle East Airlines (MEA) resumed direct flights to Baghdad on October 29 for the first time in 25 years. MEA will operate four flights a week, according to MEA chairman Mohammad El-Hout. Meanwhile, El-Hout said he expects MEA net profits to top \$100 million in 2009 as MEA benefits from the record

number of tourists who have visited Lebanon so far this year. Air Transport World Magazine earlier ranked MEA among 25 leading airlines worldwide in terms of net profit and operational income in 2008.

RUSSIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO
OPEN REGIONAL OFFICE IN BEIRUT

14. (U) The Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry will open a regional office in Beirut in early 2010, according to Byblos Bank's weekly economic report. The office will work on boosting commercial, industrial, and cultural relations with Lebanon and the region, as well as organize trade fairs to promote Russian products. In 2008, Lebanese exports to Russia were valued at \$8 million, while Russian exports to Lebanon were valued at \$503 million.

LEBANON IT AND ICT
REGIONAL PLAYER

15. (U) Lebanon ranked 35 out of 173 countries worldwide and second in the Arab world in exports of Information Technology (IT) and Information Communication Technology (ICT) in 2007, according to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). UNCTAD also noted that Lebanon exported \$6.95 billion in IT and ICT-enabled services, making it one of the largest exporters of such services in developing economies. These exports rose by 13.7% in 2007, accounting for 26.3% of IT and ICT-enabled exports in the Arab world.

16. (U) In parallel, Lebanon imported \$5.14 billion in IT and

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ICT-enabled services in 2007, making it the second-highest importer in the Arab region. These imports also rose by 22% in 2007, accounting for 13.4% of IT and ICT-enabled imports in the Arab world.

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